



March 2, 2011

CT. General Assembly

Members of the CT Public Safety and Security Committee:

Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. My name is Jamie DiPace, Fire Marshal and Deputy Building Official and recently retired Avon Fire Chief. Today I am here representing the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association to speak in favor of HB 6378, "AN ACT REQUIRING AN AUTOMATIC FIRE EXTINGUISHING SYSTEM IN ALL ONE AND TWO-FAMILY HOMES".

We are all concerned about life safety for our residents and firefighters. While smoke detectors alert people they do nothing to control or prevent fires from growing. The use of synthetic material and composite furniture has increased the fuel load so today's fires burn faster and hotter thus reducing escape time. Many homes being built today are using lightweight construction methods which create a serious collapse concern for firefighters entering to search for victims and suppress the fire.

Smoke detectors do save lives but they are not enough. Most people do not realize that detectors have a 10 year life and that the reliability declines with age. Home fire sprinklers are a proven way to protect both lives and property as they activate quickly and effectively to a nearby fire. Roughly 90% of the time, fires are contained by the operation of a single sprinkler thus limiting overall fire and water damage to the home.

Residential fire sprinkler systems are a fairly simple system to install. A water supply, pipe, and sprinkler heads are all that are required. Data from the Insurance Service Office (ISO) says that homeowners would benefit by receiving discounts up to 12%.

Connecticut's fire service is aware of today's fire hazards and its goal is to protect the citizens we serve. We are asking you for support. The installation of a fire sprinkler system is another way to accomplish our goal.

In Avon, thanks to the support from builders and developers we have been successful in having many homes protected by fire sprinklers

On a personal note, my own home is being protected by fire sprinklers.

Thank you for this opportunity to address this issue and feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

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